

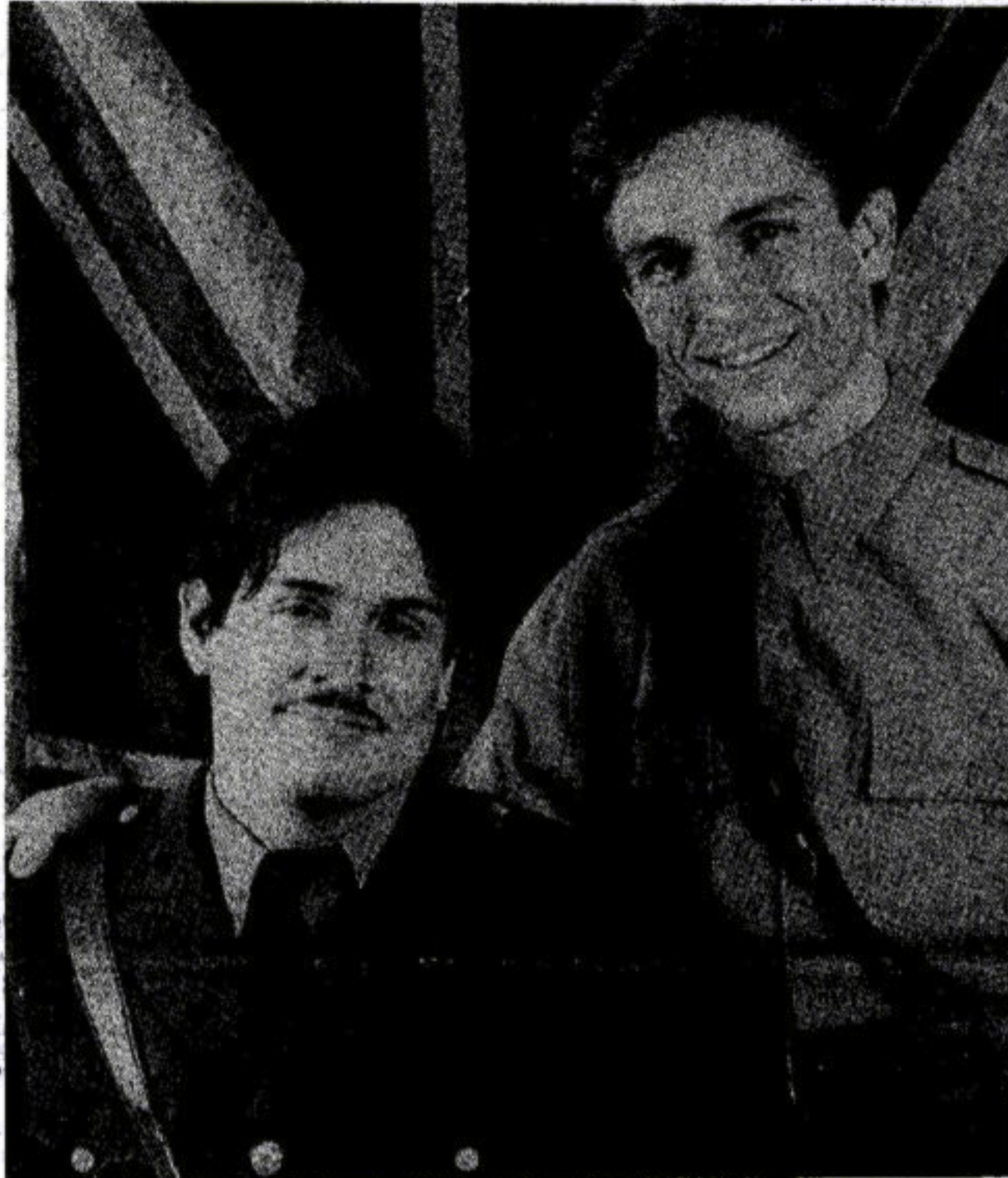


Give the People Light and they will find their own way.

The Wisconsin Light

AIDS PATIENT MEDICAL CARE: NATIONAL DISGRACE

Two Milwaukee Nursing Homes to Accept AIDS Patients March 15



J.P. Barnes Photography

David Cecarini (left) stars as Billy Bishop and John Wilson plays the piano player in Theatre Tesseract's current production of "Billy Bishop Goes to War." The play runs through March 19 at Milwaukee Lincoln Center for the Arts, 820 E. Knapp St.

State Refuses Sale of Health Insurance Without HIV Blood Test

By Bill Meunier

[Milwaukee]- In a move found to be almost inconceivable by many observers, the Wisconsin State Insurance Commissioner's Office has refused to allow the sale of a health insurance policy that would not require applicants to take the AIDS blood test. The Golden Rule Insurance Company, the nation's largest seller of individual health insurance, was denied permission to sell the new policy.

Under the terms of the proposed policy, Golden Rule would not require any applicant to take the HIV blood test for AIDS anti-bodies. There would be no coverage for AIDS if the disease (no exposure to the disease) had its onset during the first year of the policy. After

the first year, full coverage of up to \$1 million would be provided to anyone who was diagnosed as having the disease.

In a letter to Golden Rule, Susan Abdel Moncim, Director of Marketing for State Insurance Commissioner David Haase, stated, "Since Wisconsin law permits insurers to test applicants for AIDS, we believe insurers have the responsibility to screen applicants during the underwriting process before the policy is issued." Moneim's letter also states, "It continues to be our position that policies containing limitations related to the treatment of AIDS or ARC will not be approved for sale in Wisconsin."

The rejection has provoked outrage
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Green Bay and Milwaukee MCC's Receive Commissioned Status

[Green Bay]- As the result of several months of intensive work, Green Bay's Angel of Hope, Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), submitted its formal petition for Commissioned Status to the Great Lakes District Committee of the United Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches (UFMCC) at the District Conference held at Peoria, Illinois, during October, 1988. It was supported by an extensive list of supporter's signatures.

The Committee, on review, approved and granted Angel of Hope, MCC, Commissioned Status with full voice and vote. This represents a significant achievement for the Green Bay church. New Hope, MCC, Milwaukee, received approval for Commissioned Status at the same time.

Angel of Hope, MCC, has been functioning in Green Bay for over two years. Initially the church was an extension of Good Shepherd Parish of Chicago. In May, 1988, the church was granted New Wing status, and all memberships were transferred back to Angel of Hope.

The new status grants Angel of Hope permanency in Green Bay and allows greater independent influence in local church affairs.

Angel of Hope joins other Commissioned Churches of UFMCC. The denomination has member churches throughout the United States, Canada and in over 13 foreign countries. The church is totally inclusive and open to all Christians.

He is young. He is living with AIDS. Beyond his closed hospital door he hears the sound of plastic scraping on the tile floor. With great effort, he lifts his weakened body out of the bed and goes to find his dinner tray left there for him to retrieve himself. That's the way it always is at breakfast, at lunch, at dinner, everyday.

An older man, an AIDS victim, awakens in his own home in great pain with a fever of 105. It is late, but he calls his doctor only to be told to "see me in the morning." When he protests, he is told that "You brought this on yourself."

According to the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP), 3,000-4,000 AIDS sufferers live homeless on the streets of New York because there is no one willing or available to care for them.

A recent broadcast of CBS-TV's "West 57th Street" confirmed this, noting that 3-4 percent of American doctors are caring for 60-75 percent of AIDS patients. In future years, those percentages, according to the report, are not likely to change. This means that more people with AIDS will receive less care or none at all if something is not done.

In a televised interview for the program, a Phoenix, Arizona doctor affirmed this, saying, "My colleagues have a lot of ways of shunting a person with AIDS to me, to any doctor they think is Gay. But, no matter what reason they use, what words they say, what they're really telling me is, 'Take him. I don't want him. He's yours anyway. I'm stretched to the limit now.'" he said.

Milwaukee is no exception to the rest of the country where discrimination against AIDS patients can be overt, but is more often subtle.

Family and friends of AIDS patients tell of doctors who can't be found to discuss the case; nurses who, out of fear or for other reasons, are less than helpful.



Jerry Johnson

Doug Nelson

Sources in Milwaukee close to the situation say that AIDS sufferers are too often at the end of the line when it comes to medical attention and care. One noted that the discrimination is subtle, "so subtle that only people directly involved all the time can see it."

They went on to note that often people with AIDS, like others, are so unfamiliar with the medical system that they don't know what they should expect in the way of care. Hence, they are not aware that they are being discriminated against. Even when this is not the case, AIDS victims, like many other people, are intimidated by doctors and the elaborate technology of modern medicine and are afraid to speak up for their rights.

Doug Nelson, Executive Director of the Milwaukee AIDS Project (MAP) pointed out that "There are many wonderful doctors and hospital nurses going above and beyond." But, he admitted, there is a problem with institutional discrimination. The health care industry, hospitals and nursing homes, in many instances, are

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not sensitive to the care needs of AIDS patients and, in fact, there are many examples of "gross discrimination."

Recently, after strenuous negotiations by MAP and the AIDS Coalition of Milwaukee, the nursing home industry yielded and, for the first time, conceded to a limited response to the AIDS crisis. Two nursing homes agreed to open their doors to AIDS patients. This will happen on or
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Educational Employees In Madison Organize

...wakes up as a "fagot" through her window. A note "Lezzie Bitch" is left in her mailbox. The principal claims it is not a school matter, even though similar notes have been intercepted in her classroom.

A teacher pulls into the parking lot at school to see his name painted on the side of the building, calling him a "fagot."

A teacher receives harassing phone calls from another school staff member.

A teacher is denied bereavement leave to be at the side of his hospitalized partner.

Are these scenarios possible in the only state with a Gay rights law? Are they possible in a city with a stringent non-discrimination policy? Unfortunately, yes!

In response to these and other incidences of harassment, a group of Lesbian and Gay school staff from the Madison area in the Spring of 1988, formed the Gay and Lesbian Educational Employees. As a result of these meetings, a delegation presented a list of concerns to the director of Madison Teachers, Inc. This was done to make him aware of our presence and our needs.

Since the beginning of the 1988-89 school year, the group has met on a biweekly basis to provide a safe place for staff to come together, to encourage a sense of community, to combat isolation, and to validate our worth as educators and support personnel. Discussions have focused on difficulties and prejudices encountered by Gay and Lesbian members of school systems. Activities have included speakers from Madison AIDS Support Network, PICADA, PFLAG, and the County Board as well as a lake-front picnic and potlucks.

One accomplishment of the group was to make the Madison Metropolitan School District aware of the need to re-examine their policy of bereavement leave, in order to bring it into line with the City of Madison. The group has recently received a grant from the New Harvest Foundation for the purchase and dissemination of educational materials.

Anyone wishing further information should write: Gay and Lesbian Educational Employees, c/o Madison Teachers, Inc., 821 Williamson St. Madison, WI 53703 or contact Doug or volunteer at the United, (608) 255- 8582.